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Moraga Garden Club cherishes old traditions, creates new memories



Photo provided

Submitted by **Linda U. Foley**

The Moraga Garden Club annually
decorates the local library with gar-
lands, bows and wreaths in Decem-

ber. The star of the decoration effort,
however, is a tree festooned with 'crit-
ter' ornaments, adding a hint of the
mystery of the forest.

The tradition for critter orna-
ments was started by Moraga Garden
Club member Jamie Bonetto in a
workshop at her home about 30 years
ago. Dried pine cones, leaves, twigs –
with the imagination of the creator –
were turned into miniature quirky an-
imals and whimsical dolls.

The history of these ornaments
can be attributed to the Brandywine
River Museum in Chadds Ford, Penn-
sylvania, in 1972 to emphasize the
museum's role in protecting the nat-
ural, cultural and historical resources
of the region. All ornaments were
made of completely natural compo-
nents (i.e. dried flowers, acorns, Queen
Anne's lace, pods and spices for eyes).

The Smithsonian Institute also
created a critter tree. In 1984, Nancy
Reagan invited volunteers to decorate
a natural tree and because she
loved red, lots of cockscomb and eu-
onymus were used.

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